

SERVICE DATE - JULY 16, 2004

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423****ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT****STB DOCKET NO. AB-33 (Sub. No. 217X)
Union Pacific Railroad Company – Abandonment Exemption –
in Monterey County, CA****BACKGROUND**

In this proceeding, Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 for UP to abandon 1.62 miles of rail line located between M.P. 121.5 near Spreckels Junction and M.P. 123.12 at the end of the line at Spreckels, in Monterey County, California. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the notice becomes effective, UP will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances and to dispose of the right-of-way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

According to UP, the line proposed for abandonment, known as the Spreckels Industrial Lead, was constructed by the Pajaro Valley Consolidated Railroad in 1902. Topography is generally flat. The entire surrounding area is used for agricultural purposes. Fields for growing lettuce and other produce are immediately adjacent to virtually all of the line's right-of-way. New residential expansion is underway nearby serving persons working in Salinas to the north and ocean-front communities such as Monterey and Seaside further west. UP states that there are no structures over fifty years in age which are affected by the proposed abandonment.

There are no shippers on the line, according to UP, and no commodities have originated or terminated on the line for over two years. There is no overhead traffic over the line. The right-of-way varies between 50 feet and 60 feet in width. There is an additional 70 feet wide by 250 feet long parcel at the end of the line in Spreckels which was once the depot grounds. The sugar mill (now closed) once served by the line still stands across the street from the depot site. The line does not contain federally granted right-of-way. Railroad title to the property is considered fee with the exception of easement portions contained within two public grade crossings at Hunters Lane and Harkins Road.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

UP submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. UP served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. We have reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

The line has not been used for freight traffic for at least two years. There will therefore be no effect on regional or local transportation systems and patterns and no diversion of traffic to other transportation systems or modes.

HISTORIC REVIEW

UP submitted an historic report as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.8(a)]. The applicant/railroad served the report on the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.8(c). We have reviewed the report and find that no historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) would be affected by the proposed abandonment.

Pursuant to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for implementing the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1) and 36 CFR 800.8, we have determined that the proposed abandonment will not affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 CFR 800.11(d), consists of the applicant's/railroad's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and this EA, which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that no environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority:

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, and if the recommended conditions are imposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

TRAILS USE

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Services responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact the Office of Public Services directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Kenneth Blodgett, who prepared this environmental assessment. Environmental comments may also be filed electronically on the Board's web site, www.stb.dot.gov, by clicking on the "E-FILING" link. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-33 (Sub No. 217X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have any questions regarding this

environmental assessment, you should contact Kenneth Blodgett, the environmental contact for this case by phone at (202) 565-1554, fax at (202) 565-9000, or e-mail at blodgettk@stb.dot.gov.

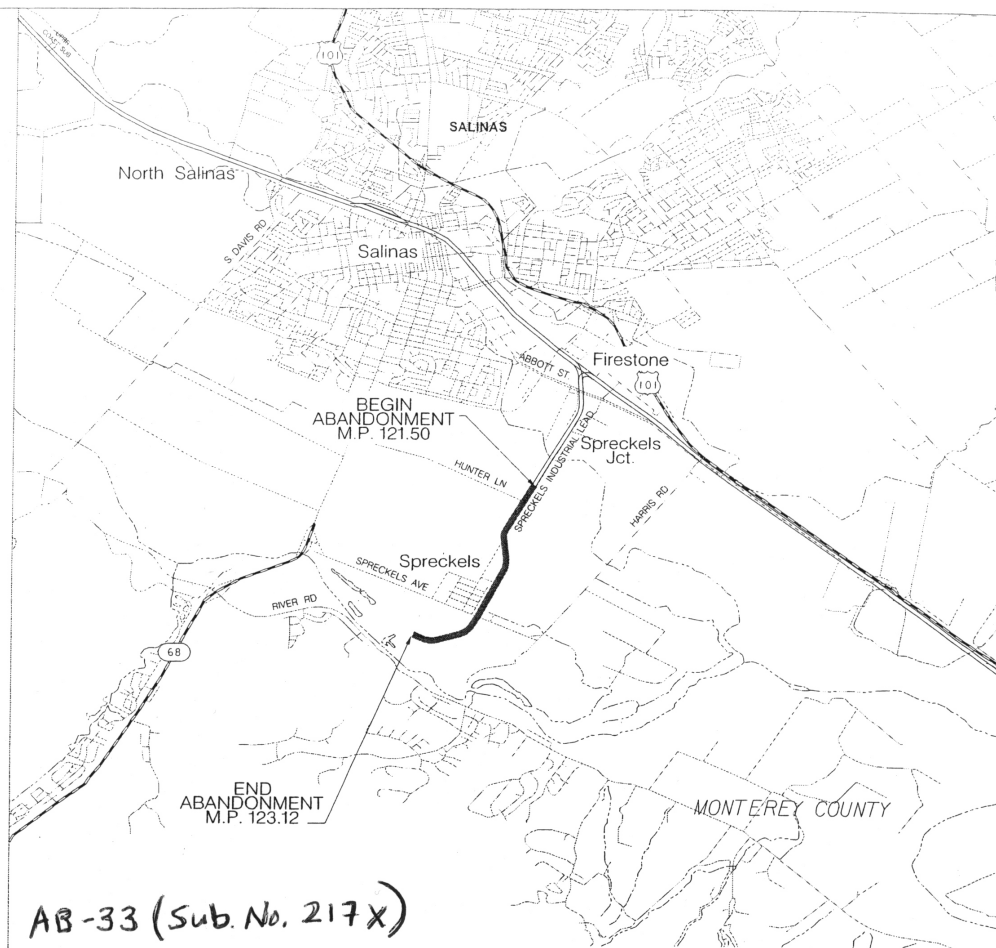
Date made available to the public: July 16, 2004.

Comment due date: **August 2, 2004 (15 days).**

By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment



AB-33 (Sub. No. 217X)
Dec. I.D. 34847

NOTE: THERE ARE NO 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES

- LEGEND
- UPRR LINES TO BE ABANDONED
 - OTHER UPRR LINES
 - OTHER RAILROADS
 - PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS
 - OTHER ROADS
 - 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES

SPRECKELS INDUSTRIAL LEAD

MP 121.50 TO MP 123.12
TOTAL OF 1.62 MILES
IN MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CO.

SPRECKELS INDUSTRIAL LEAD

SPRECKELS JCT. TO SPRECKELS, CALIFORNIA
INCLUDING 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES

SCALE 0 1 2 MILES

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DATE: 16-Jan-04 10:39

AB-33 (Sub-No. 207X)